

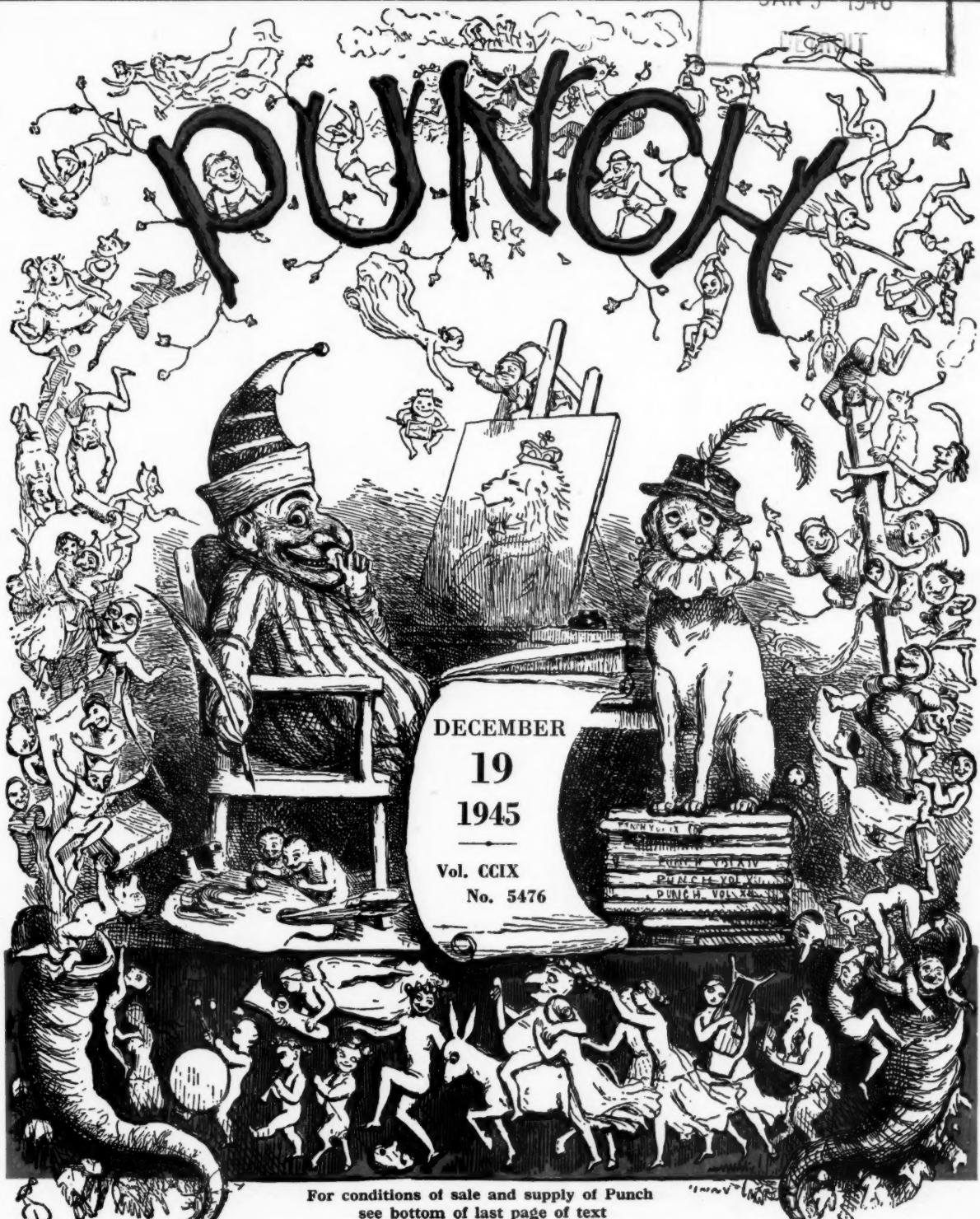
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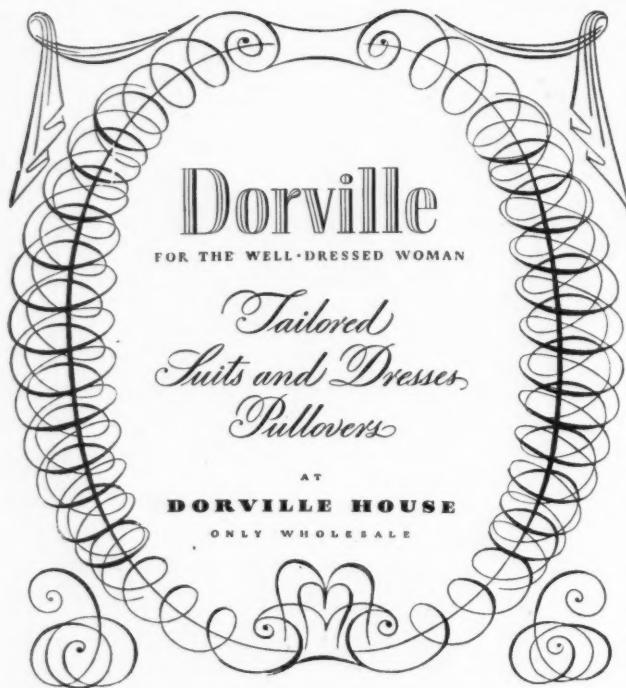
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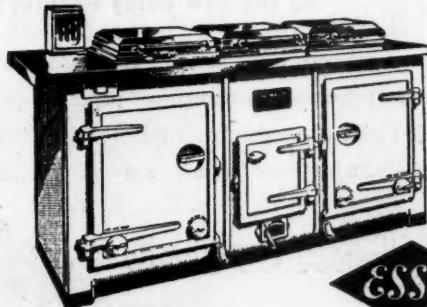
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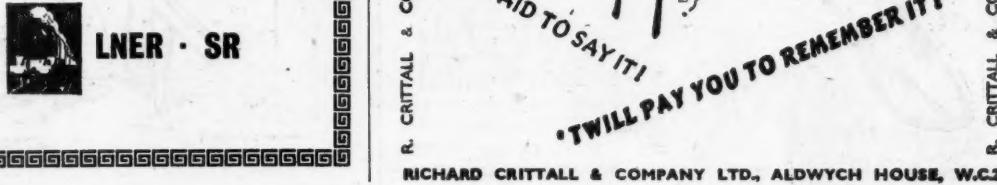
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Its flavour puts you on top of the world without making you a dictator, its aroma persuades you to surrender without preaching defeatism, its counsel, when all about you is feverish hotheadedness, is always cool, mature and wise.



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PUNCH

Or
The London Charivari



Vol. CCIX No. 5476

December 19 1945

Charivaria

THE Christmas turkey position looks serious, but we are assured that efforts are being made to speed up the theft of birds for the black market.

An astrologer says he has not predicted anything during the past year. Nevertheless, lots of things came true.

• •
A gloomy correspondent, observing that the American loan is to be repaid in the fifty years following 1950, asks whether he may expect repayment of post-war income-tax credits directly after that.

• •
"WILL the young lady and gentleman that knocked the gent down in Abbey-road, Monday night, 10 o'clock, as he was going to work on night bakery, please call at 30, Stanley-road, Barrow, between 6-7 p.m."—North Country paper.

When they will hear something to their disadvantage.



• •
"GOOLE POLICE.
DANCE IN THE BATHS."
Notice in "Goole Times."
Water too hot for them?

• •
"Don't ring up your doctor unnecessarily," advises a medical writer. If in doubt, describe your symptoms to the Telephone Supervisor and let her decide.

• •
It is pleasing to hear in these unsettled times that the quality of snow that fell in the North recently was practically pre-war.



• •
We are asked to keep special tit-bits for our pets this Christmas. Mr. Churchill is believed to be saving up his cigar-ends for Mr. Aneurin Bevan.

• •
At Neath a cow entered a chemist's shop and went behind the counter. A short-sighted customer, encouraged by her unusually mild expression, courageously asked for saccharin.

• •
"If music be the food of love (Versions 2 and 3)
What can we poor females do?"
Concert programme in "Radio Times."
Play on, of course.

• •
Beards, a hygienist reminds us, are notorious carriers of germs. Don't forget to fumigate your chimney on the 25th.

• •
A reader asks us to insert the following: "Elderly spinster, furnishing a home, wishes to meet elderly bachelor (or widower); view priority dockets."

• •
The marked rise in the marriage-rate in Scotland this month is thought to be due to the fact that two can give as cheaply as one.

• •
In time, we are told, a pianist develops great strength in his wrists and forearms. At the peak of his powers he can make the "Warsaw Concerto" audible in a Naafi canteen.



The Old Place

I WISH the man I met at the corner of Bretton Avenue, and Dumbarton Lane, and was an old friend of, and still want to be, would write and tell me who he is and where he lives, that is to say if he has the slightest recollection of meeting me, and what is my name and my present address.

Looking back at that sentence, I do not like it much. It is not a true triumph of syntax, nor even of grammar, which, as you know, is the same word as glamour. But I am moved by no mere sense of curiosity in writing it. The emotion lies far deeper, and is much more real. For this man asked me to dinner.

It is the season of Goodwill and Peace, and there is nothing that we desire more at this time of year than to meet old friends, and eat and drink with them, and talk together of old times before the crackling Yule-log at a warm fireside.

Especially, I think, do we desire to do this at their expense rather than our own.

One phrase, in particular, that my old friend used sticks in my mind. "We will crack," he said, "a bottle of good claret together." I don't know why he said "crack." I take it that he will draw the cork out very carefully indeed, and have the wine brought carefully to the temperature of the room. In fact, I feel sure that he will—that he will have—that he would have—done these things.

In an episode of such swift and tragic intensity it is not easy to keep the tenses, any more than the rest of the grammar, under due control. Perhaps I had better say how it all occurred.

We met, as I have stated, at the corner of these two roads whose actual names I have concealed, coining others out of my own fancy, on a bright and extremely unpleasant morning, with the wind at nor-nor-east, about half-past ten o'clock of the forenoon, and we instantly and simultaneously hailed each other.

"Why, if it isn't you!" we said, almost in the same breath, and neither of us thought for the moment of denying it.

"After all these years," he went on.

"It must be twelve at least," said I.

"More like fourteen or fifteen. You haven't altered a bit," he lied.

"Nor have you," I said, imperilling also my salvation.

"Where are you living now?"

"Just up there. And you?"

"The old place. Look here, why not come to dinner one evening?"

And he named a date. He wrote it down in his pocket-book. And it was then that he made the remark about the claret. He also said, "There'll be nobody else there. Only just ourselves."

I was glad of that. Even the word "ourselves" struck a slightly discordant note. It was ambiguous. It might indicate (and out of the dim obscurity of the past, I seemed to remember one) a wife. I have never, in former days, taken any stern view about the teetotalism of women, but I now find that I prefer it, and I was optimistic enough to believe that my old friend's wife (if wife there was) was very nearly a Rechabite. A cocktail possibly, or a glass, a single glass, of sherry. But when it came to good claret, I thought certainly no. She would not care for red wine.

We stood a moment in silence, and he concluded, "Well, that's all fixed then. I'll expect you at half-past seven. I must be getting along to my bus now." Simple words, yet leaving behind them how vast a sense of mystery. For

I was conscious at once that all was not "fixed." Several important details required elucidation. I did make one despairing effort to settle them.

"Let me see," I said, "how do I get there from here?"

"Oh, you know. Round at the top and second turning on the right. Nothing's been altered there, thank goodness."

And so saying, he pointed with his umbrella at the trunk of a large chestnut tree in the middle distance.

For a pair of old squirrels intent on a festive rendezvous, the explanation would have been admirable. For me, it lacked precision. But those were his last words. He walked on, turned a corner, and disappeared down the hill.

Easy enough to say that I should have run after him and begged for a little more enlightenment. That I should have cried "Let me come your way this morning and share your bus with you. I really prefer it to my train." There in that bus no doubt I should have had a chance of probing the heart of the problem and picking his brains; or, if not his brains, his pocket. I might, for instance, have stolen his ration-book or his identity-card. But I have my pride; the infatuate pride, I fear, of a man who believes that by deep concentration of his thoughts he can make memory return.

I have concentrated them. It has not returned. There are other courses open to me, no doubt. There is the "Times" Agony Column, but I have rejected it. I find a difficulty about the phraseology. "Will the gentleman who suddenly met an old friend, and asked him to dine and crack a bottle of good claret at the old place . . ." Somehow it savours of greed. And what is more, it would be very expensive.

There is the police station.

"WANTED.—Information about an elderly well-set up man of fresh complexion, wearing grey overcoat with dark hat and carrying a rolled umbrella . . ."

But is that really a case for the police? I doubt it. Breasting a serious crime wave, would they really have time to attend to a domestic imbroglio like mine? After all, it is only of happy expectation that my old friend can be said to have robbed me. There was no technical nor legal fraud.

A chance remains that he may read these lines, and I do not forget that chance. I am never called to the telephone nor hear the postman's knock without hoping for some further clue to this bizarre affair. But the hope grows fainter. The hour of the proposed meeting is only too near, and I have a sickening apprehension that the fire will be lit, the table laid, my old friend and (it may be) his kind yet abstemious consort will be waiting, waiting—for what? No glad sound of footsteps, no joyous clatter and slam of a taxicab at the gate. The holly is wreathed above the mantelpiece. The good bottle has been cracked, but cracked in vain.

"Can anything have happened to our old friend?" Echo and silence will answer.

There will be a ghost at the old place that night.

EVOE.

Delicate Distinction

"Mr. ——, known to Newcastle-on-Tyne as a citizen of repute and in the south as a trade union organiser . . ."—"Daily Express."

This Week's Generous Offer

"DOUBLE-DECKER BUS and Hangar with Planes in exchange for Small Doll's Pram."—Advt. in *Bath paper*.



IN SEARCH OF A HOME



"I was wondering what to buy Agatha for Christmas."

The Poet Under Orders

CHRISTMAS again!" said the Editor, bubbling over with glee.
 "Christmas again!" I echoed, convulsed with Dickensian mirth.
 "Oh, let your verses be full of bonhomie!" cried he,
 "For—please make a note—there is Peace upon Earth."

(Anticipating a roar from a whacking great huge
 Defeatist, we stick out our tongue and say "Scrooge!")

Let's begin, then, in the right spirit. Goodwill towards bus-crews
 Who won't let us stand and leave us shivering in bus-queues.
 Goodwill towards poker-faced gents who say "No cigarettes,"
 And taxi-cab drivers who hide on wet nights, and cinema usherettes
 Who, under cover of Stygian darkness, use us to fill up a row.
 Goodwill towards the band of good fellows who'll "eat it" if they don't know
 What'll win the 2.30—and who've never yet eaten their hat.
 Goodwill towards the very dear friend who discovered a thing called a Flat,

And the other dear friend who not only swiped our umbrella
 But dropped our one bottle while bringing it up from the cellar.
 Goodwill towards B.B.C. crooners and dancing bugs with the jitters.
 Goodwill towards all men (yes, darling, even the atom-splitters).

Oh, no, Jack, Christmas, I fear,
 This year will be *quite* austere.
 It grows daily clearer
 That things must become austerer
 And (not to mince matters) austerer
 Before we can hope for merrier quips
 To fall from the lips
 Of Sir Stafford Cripps.
 After all, exports come first, Vera.
 —from "To Start You Squawking," by Auntie Poppy.
 (Motoring papers, please copy.)

Come, let's leave our jolly post-war chores
 And join the jolly shoppers at the Stores.

Though "Useful Gifts" are hard to find
 And "Novelties" are dead as dead,

O frenzied female, be resigned—
Muse on the happy days ahead
When you'll be able to buy an electric roaster,
or a mechanical scrubber, or an eye-level oven
For Doris and Fred.

Meanwhile, how about giving Doris this Fur Bolero, at £126-19-11?
Expensive? My dear!—you need only three coupons. It's a chance straight from heaven!

Conversation in the Furnishing Department.

"That ain't Sherryton nor Chippingdale neither, Pop."
"No more it is neither. P'raps it's a Ribbentrop."

Of course there are always books. "Have you *The Curse of Macadam*?"
"Sorry, reprinting, madam."
"Or *The Murder at Little Minting*?"
"Sorry, madam, reprinting."
"Or *Five Corpses in a Quarry*?"
"Reprinting, sorry."
"Or *Forever Flo*?"
"No."
"Or *No Chrysanthemums for Miss Caldecott*?"
"Certainly not."

Still, there are books. "Would your nephew consider the Works
Of Lord Alfred Tennyson? Or a volume on *Polynesian Physical Jerks*,
Or a pungent pamphlet on the *Ethics of Nationalization*,
Or the *Dangers of Inflation*, or *This Feeling of Frustration*?
Perhaps he might be interested in the *Economic Problems of Utopia*,
Myopia and Cornucopia? Well, madam, we had Shaw—
Oh, I beg your pardon—no, we don't stock Bradshaw."

Our own choice would be "*Attaboy, Attlee!*" a book of poems by A. B.
(Whoever A. B. may be).
Listen to these three gems,
Great favourites of Clem's.

In all the land who's happier than the hosier?
For him, at least, this England's looking rosier.
Christmas should find him lively as a conger—
Soon he'll be selling socks two inches longer!

The public, I am told, are apt to grouse
Because, it seems, they cannot get a house—
Sir Dyard Denture-Denture (Con., *Great Gossidge*):
"Not even a mouse-trap, not a blessed sossidge!"—
Let us prepare the public for a shock,
A pleasant one, and judging by the clock
An imminent one. The House, I see, is what is called
"all ears"—
Bananas are on the way (loud Ministerial cheers).

Traducer of Governments, attention, pray!
Rome wasn't bilked* in a day.

Seasonable suggestion for "Little Anne,"
Who writes to ask what to do about Gran.
Why not take Gran to see *Cyanide and Old Blouses*?
Now in its 10th year and still playing to cracked† houses.

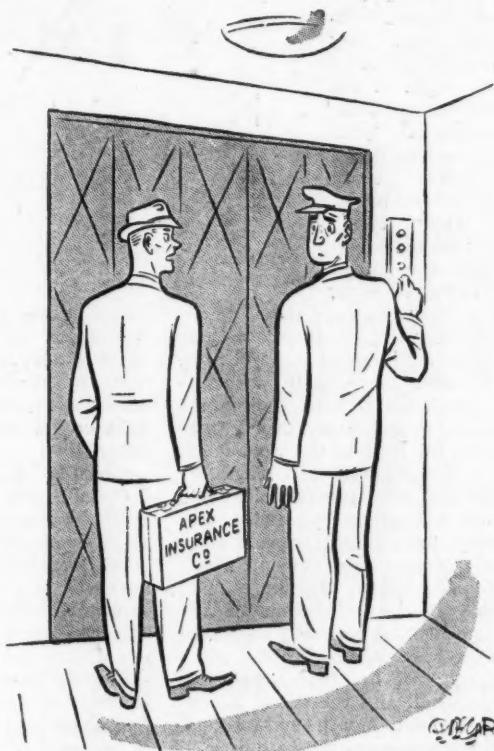
Finally:

Do Great Waves of Nostalgia sweep over you at thought of your Christmas Dinner?
Do you see Plum Puddings before the eyes? Are you getting mentally thinner?
Do Monster Mince Pies trouble your dreams and Boxes of Crystallized Fruits?
Come between you and your work? Does your stomach sink into your boots?
When you draw your Rations? Do you wake up jumpy and jerky?
And inclined to be homicidal if anyone mentions a Turkey?
If so, read the following testimonial from Mrs. Batsbarn, of Pinner:
After taking one bottle of Anti-Nos, I hereby declare I lost all taste for pre-war Christmas fare.
After two bottles, I didn't give two hoots or a damn
For anything but Vienna steak and Spam.

○ ○

Possibly

"Consequently the prima facie liability to Estate Duty under Section 2 (1) (c), Finance Act 1894, incorporating Section 38 (2) (a) of the Customs and Inland Revenue Act 1881, as amended by Section 11 (1) of the Customs and Inland Revenue Act 1889, and modified by Section 59 (1), Finance Act (1909-10) Act 1910, is not affected by Section 3 of the Finance Act, 1894, except possibly as to the extent mentioned."—From an Estate Duty Office letter to a firm of solicitors.



"Ever thought what would happen if this lift suddenly failed and went hurtling down?"

* Printer's error

† Isn't he a terror?

At the Pictures

MORE BRITISH MERIT

You have probably been reading about nothing but *Caesar and Cleopatra*, so that these notes on earlier phenomena will have a somewhat old-world air for you. Well, I have seen *Caesar and Cleopatra* and think moderately well of it, but I propose to leave writing about it until a fortnight hence, when I hope it may have a drawing too. For to-day we will go back to *The Rake's Progress* (Director: SIDNEY GILLIAT), a much less pretentious British work, well worth seeing, the main fault of which I think is excessive length. I was admittedly entertained throughout; nevertheless there were moments when I realized that the entertainment was going on rather longer than usual, which is generally an indication that it is going on a trifle too long.

The narrative method is the flashback—the single, long flashback, in the sense that we begin at the end and then see (and, for occasional brief linking passages, hear) "The Rake's" story told from the beginning. There seems little reason for beginning with the climax really; unless, perhaps, to get over the message that "people are what they are, and there's nothing much you can do about it," and to be able to offer other small after-the-event comments without dulling the end in a fog of moralizing. Nor is there much notably fresh in the story itself, which is a straightforward biography of a playboy of the nineteen-thirties—but one for whom we never lose sympathy; for as REX HARRISON plays him he is plainly an intelligent, witty, good-hearted fellow, and, in spite of the debts and the dud cheques and the deceit, not what is generally suggested by the words "wastrel" and "cad." But the picture has been made with care and skill, and the detail is constantly bright, humorous and striking. (I notice a tendency, most unusual in British films, to try to establish minor characters as personages even apart from what they may have to do to

advance the plot.) Of the other principals the most memorable I think is LILLI PALMER as the pathetic little Austrian-Jewish wife.

Then there is *Pink String and Sealing Wax* (Director: ROBERT HAMER), a more mannered and artificial piece but equally well worth seeing, and still another from the current crop of British films that we can very reasonably be proud of. This is a "period" story of Brighton in the 'nineties, and a good deal of the film is devoted to emphasizing the period; in essence it is a murder story, but such detail freshens it. Moreover the Victorian curiosities are used with

when one has enjoyed something, however trivial it is, and I enjoyed *Wonder Man* (Director: BRUCE HUMBERSTONE) as a whole more, I think, than DANNY KAYE's first picture *Up In Arms*. Of course there's a lot of empty popular stuff shoved in to make weight—girls and dresses and so on—but even so, less than there was in the earlier film. And I thoroughly approve of DANNY KAYE as a comedian. Moreover, like many comedians (of a particular sort—I don't include the one-trick personalities), he is, given the chance, a real master of naturalistic acting. It was probably this talent of his that led to the choice of this miscellaneously odd story for him, a story

in which he plays twins ("monozygotic—superidentical"), one of them an energetic and insouciant entertainer who gets killed and comes back as a ghost to perplex the other, a studious type, by taking possession of his body. Most of the wildest fun comes from Mr. KAYE as Mr. KAYE, whether he is supposed to be the entertainer or the sober brother posing as the entertainer; but there are some remarkably good moments of real imaginative acting, as when the sober brother tries to adopt a tough and slangy manner of speech without the ghost's help. The whole thing works up to that never-failing

[*The Rake's Progress*]

RAKE EN ROUTE

Dean	KYNASTON REEVES
Fogroy	GUY MIDDLETON
Vivian	REX HARRISON

restraint and not heaped up crudely for cheap laughs—though twopenny whiskies and penny gins, for instance, will always get their titters, and it must have needed a nice calculation to balance that kind of effect against the other kind. This is the tale of a publican's wife who murders her husband, and GOOGIE WITHERS is really impressive as the murderer; but there is plenty of interest too in the subsidiary plot, which concerns the iron rule of a local chemist (MERVYN JOHNS) over his large rebellious family. The stuff about the daughter's singing—and once or twice she sings at length—is quite irrelevant, but the troubles of the son (GORDON JACKSON) are a legitimate part of the narrative. This is a good atmosphere-and-suspense picture, well done in every department.

One ought to be honest and admit

scene of confusion, an operatic production in which non-members of the cast, in borrowed costumes, are pursued on to the stage and take a riotous part in the action; this is as funny as usual. Of Mr. KAYE's earlier turns I think I liked best his appearance as a Russian baritone struggling with an attack of hay fever.

R. M.

• •

My Nanny is Over the Ocean . . .

"He sat down at the other end of the sea, and said, politely and with a weary smile, 'Good day, Nurse Peardrop. Resting a bit, eh?'"—*Cheshire paper*.

• •

"CONTENTS OF ENGINEERS for disposal. Small machines, tools, etc., by appointment."—*Adv. in Surrey paper*.
May we see the X-rays?

Study in Counterpoint

MR. REX HARRIS'S letter to *Melodymaker and Rhythm* last week is going to stir up a lot of trouble, I am afraid, and I warn him that the point he is trying to make (namely, that he did not say that Mr. Spencer Williams told him that when he (Williams) wrote "I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None o' This Jelly Roll," he intended "Jelly Roll" to mean nothing more than a sweetmeat) will quickly be submerged under a flood of letters prompted only very indirectly by Mr. Harris's own.

Everyone will remember the last time this happened. "Swing-starved Hepster" wrote to the editor alleging that Mel Stitzel had used a newspaper across the strings of his piano in Chick Bullock's recording of "Sobbin' Blues" — and that started it.

G. Boot, of West Wittering, pointed out scornfully the following week that when Bullock made "Sobbin' Blues" his pianist was Pinky Schoefflick, Stitzel having gone over to Muggsy Spanier's Ragtimers some time before. There was also a stiff note from W. G. Nobbs, Sevenoaks:

"Mel threw up piano in '24 and took up Portuguese celeste, muted with horse-hair pads. Anyway, his only disk with Bullock Ork was 'Snag It Stomp.' 'Swing-starved Hepster' is nuts."

The next week's crop of letters was roughly divided between anti-Nobbs and anti-Hepsters, with a sprinkling of anti-Boots. Many writers pointed out that Nobbs had his dates wrong, as Stitzel had played piano in '30 with Miff Mole and his Molers at the "Bag o' Dust," Mexico City. At this time, said some, he had introduced the climbing bass sequence in octaves in "Flash Me That Floozie"—a device now universally recognized as the foundation of boogie-woogie. Others scoffed at the idea of Pinky Schoefflick playing piano, with Bullock or anybody else, as it was well known that Pink was a brass man who had actually patented a trombone-slide still used by coloured orchestras.

It was worse the next week. "Solid Four" said that if Miff Mole had ever played in Mexico City, he ("Solid Four") was the drum-part from Spike Hughes' "Six Bells Stampede"; and the disk containing the revolutionary bass ascribed to Stitzel (though actually played by Knuckles Carboni) was "Jazz Me Blues," copied note for note from the orchestration used by Sticky Glugo's Gum-sticks at the "Allnite" in Pittsburgh. Other letters in that

issue maintained that Bullock had never had a band, that Pinky Schoefflick had retired from music in '18 and was a swimming-instructor in Vermont, that the "Bag o' Dust" had become a hat-shop in '27 and that boogie-woogie had been discovered by Palestrina.

"Solid Four" came in for hard words the week after. There was no "Allnite" in Pittsburgh. "Six Bells Stampede" had been written by Albert Coates. The idea of Carboni's having played the bass part in anything was laughable, as he was a clarinet-player and a one-instrument man at that who had never got up amongst the resin with name outfits like Bullock or the Gum-sticks, but had toured the Middle West with a corny three-piece and was now in jail for taking part in a lynching. "Two-in-a-bar Bass-player" wrote:

"I actually spoke to Miff Mole on Grantham station during his English tour in '27, when he told me that Knuckles Carboni played piano in gloves to get a soft touch. Does any other top-line piano-man get his tone this way?"

This letter administered a sharp flick to the controversy's tail-fin, and most of next week's letters under the now familiar heading "Stitzel's Fake-Harpsichord" dealt with Jack Teagarden's leather-faced mouthpieces and the way Flips Russell got his tone-colours by playing the bassoon into an open cigar-box.

So there you are, Mr. Harris. You've started something, mark my words. Consider the inevitable repercussions of your denial of what Mr. Edgar Jackson said you said Mr. Spencer Williams said about "I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None o' This Jelly Roll." It will begin gently, but don't be deceived. Although the editor's first letter-bag may only contain an allegation that Williams never wrote the number at all, and possibly another that you have never seen either Williams or a Jelly Roll, the thing will gradually expand in scope and proportions.

Before very long you will be reading with surprise that you are not Rex Harris at all, but a lady bull-fiddle player who made a record of "Nut-picker's Swing" with Benny Monk's Musical Chimps three years after her body had been recovered from the inside of a bass drum at the "Hive of Jive," Kansas City.

They'll teach you to write to the papers. J. B. B.

• •

Wham!

"Again a tribunal sat on him."

Daily paper.

Pantomime Chorus Rehearses

"**R**AP!" go the shoes
of the "ponies":
"Tap!
Rip-tip-tippety!
Clip-clop-clap!"

The ballet mistress,
supple as wax
in scarlet jumper
and oyster slacks,
measures their paces,
dips, and sways.

"Tinkle! Ti-tinkle"
the music plays
(the stage piano
its keys slammed home
marking the beat like a metronome).

Lovely and serious,
gravely gay,
the "ponies" stamp
on the stage all day.
Limber and jimp,
quicksilver-fleet,
with steel-tipped shoes on their dancing
feet

they circle and weave,
divide and meet,
linking their arms to the music's beat:
cartwheel, somersault,
pirouette—
redhead,
platinum-blonde,
brunette—
their curls all tossing
in symmetry
like the plumes of the Household
Cavalry.

The bright spilt beads of their bodies
make
new patterns to form, and swirl, and
break,
each pattern repeated again, again,
to the strummed piano's
absurd refrain.

Tireless, patient, lissome, fleet,
with steel-tipped shoes on their dancing
feet

and a rip-tip-tap!
of each dainty shoe,
as the Trojans worked
the "ponies" do.

R. C. S.

Cookery Note

"At Simla the Unionists properly cooked their goose when, claiming to be only a provincial parliamentary party, they threw a spanner into the larger political arena with the sole object of crippling the Muslim League and sabotaging Pakistan."

Indian paper.



"It looks as though we're in for another confounded Dickensian Christmas."

Age/Service Group 15

HOORAY! I am leaving at last!
I have waited five years for this day.
To-morrow, ye gods! I am out—
I am leaving the Navy.

Hooray! I am leaving the drill,
The signals, the dear old Commanders,
The childish salutes, chirping Wrens,
The uniform—day in, day out—
The wardroom idea of a joke,
The slang and the living in public,
The unbusinesslike ways of the Service—
I am leaving.

I make vacuum-flasks—
Chromium-plated and cheap—
A keenly competitive line.
I must get down to business again;
I must enter some office—
I and another man—
And employ all the wits I possess
To ensure that it's I and not he
Who comes out with the order.
I must learn to look out for myself,
After all these unbusinesslike years.

I must pick up the language again—
"Re your favour—*kind* favour—to hand . . ."
It's time to unlearn, to forget
"Be pleased to inform their Lordships . . ."

And "Sir, I have the honour to report . . ."
Those ancient, circuitous phrases.
I will put them away, in the loft—
With my uniform.

I must see about clothes, business clothes—
One has to look prosperous, smart
When one calls on a buyer.
In the Navy we just didn't think;
Remember old Grant,
Old "Unsinkable" Grant,
With even his ribbons in shreds,
D.S.O., D.S.C. and the rest!
I must think about clothes.

And the office. Miss Smithers and Brown
And old Cragge—what a watch-dog he is!
"Here's the statement for Collins and Dawe—
They're seventeen days overdue,
Four poun' six and sevenpence, net—
Shall I tickle 'em up, Mr. J.,
Or will you?"

I will not, Mr. Cragge—not quite yet.
Not yet. Give me time to forget
The drill and the Wrens, the Commanders,
The salutes and the signals, the jokes,
The living in public, the slang,
The uniform—all that makes up
That unbusinesslike Service,
That gallant unbusinesslike Service
Which to-morrow, to-morrow, ye gods!
I am leaving.

• •

Assistant Masters : Are They Insane?

Any Questions?

(From the papers of A. J. Wentworth)

WELL, another term is over, and I am bound to say I shall not be sorry to have a few weeks to myself again. One is very fond of the boys, naturally, but after thirteen weeks it is a good thing to "lie fallow" for a while. Their parents never have them for more than eight weeks at a time and of course in much smaller quantities than we schoolmasters, yet they are often quite worn out, they tell me, even at the end of a month, without the worry of marks and reports and so on.

The last week of term is always a tiring time. One is a little stale, I suppose, and the boys are naturally in high spirits and rather more difficult to control. I find it a wise plan to "let up" a little after the real work of the term is over, and try to interest the boys in matters of more general concern, instead of going on religiously with maths or whatever it may be. It does them no harm to exercise their minds on some of the problems and difficulties of the larger world beyond the school walls. On Saturday morning, for instance, I made IIIA put their algebras away after break and invited them to ask me questions on any general subjects they liked. "I know," I said, smiling, "Mason is keen to tackle cube roots this morning, but just for once I am going to disappoint him." It isn't fair to pull his leg really, but I owed him one, the young

rascal, for asking me earlier in the day where I was going fishing in the holidays.

Fraser asked me what I was going to say about him in my Report, but of course I declined to be drawn. "That is not a subject of general interest, Fraser," I told him, "though it may perhaps become so when you revisit us, as a famous Old Boy, to give away the prizes. I can only tell you it will be fair."

"That's what you put last term," he replied, mistaking my meaning, "after I'd worked jolly hard for twelve weeks. It jolly well isn't fair, sir."

In the ordinary way I should not let a remark of that sort pass, but as we were all being rather informal I simply asked for the next question. I don't think Fraser meant to be impertinent. He is rather impulsive sometimes, as his father agreed when we had a chat at half-term.

Willis asked me to explain about the American loan, and I told them quite shortly how we needed goods for which as a result of the war we hadn't got ready money to pay, and how America was lending us the money so that we could buy what we wanted.

"Where are we going to buy these things, sir?" he asked. "From America?"

"Mostly, yes," I agreed.

"It's not a present, is it, sir? I mean we have got to pay the money back?"

"With interest," added Mason.

"Naturally," I said. "But we have got fifty years and more to do it in."

"Then," Mason began, wrinkling up his forehead with the effort, "it's as if I had some chocolate and young Tremayne here—"

"Not so much of it, young Mason," said Tremayne.

"—as if he wanted to buy the chocolate, only he hadn't any filthy, as usual—"

"He means lucre, sir," explained Fraser, as I raised my eyebrows. "It's just a low way of talking."

"So," went on Mason, making a silly face at Fraser, "I lent him half-a-crown and he gave it back to me in exchange for the chocolate, and then he gives me a penny a week for, well, for the whole of next term, sir, and then after that he has to give me back another half-crown."

"But, Mason," I began.

"Sir, just a mo', sir. So in the end, sir, I've got my half-crown back and another half-crown and about a shilling as well, sir, for interest, and young Tremayne, sir—"

"That will do, Tremayne," I said sharply.

"—sir, Tremayne hasn't even got the chocolate because he's eaten it, sir."

There was a general laugh at this—at Tremayne's expense, I fancy.

"They're absolute stinkers, the Americans, sir, honestly they are sir," cried Parkinson excitedly. "We had to fight for two years while they only sent us bundles and things and now we've got to pay and pay—"

"While they stuff themselves with ice-cream and eggs."

"Sir, those old Senators have got a cheek—"

"And a pilot who's been in Washington or somewhere told us last hols—"

"... we had a jolly nice Yank, if you want to know . . ."

"... with a D.F.C. and Bar, sir . . ."

"Oh, you think you know everything, Fraser . . ."

"Silence!" I roared, bringing my fist down with a bang on my desk. "You are talking a lot of silly rubbish—all of you. If we can't discuss these things seriously without—"

"Sir, the ink, sir!" shouted Mason, and looking down I saw to my horror that in striking the desk I had inadvertently dislodged my ink-pot from its holder (it rests in a

shallow sort of depression really) and was in imminent danger of getting a stream of ink all over my trousers.

I must say the boys were very prompt and helpful. They all ran up on their own initiative with blotting-paper and very soon had the worst of the mess cleared up. But of course they made rather a crowd and in their eagerness to help accidentally shoved the desk perilously near the edge of the dais. I saw the danger, but unfortunately my warning cry of "Steady!" came just too late. It was a miracle that Barrow, who happened to be underneath, was not badly hurt. As it is the bruise will be almost gone, I think, by the time he reaches home, which is a good thing. The Headmaster does not want to be bothered at Christmas-time by a lot of tiresome questions from parents.

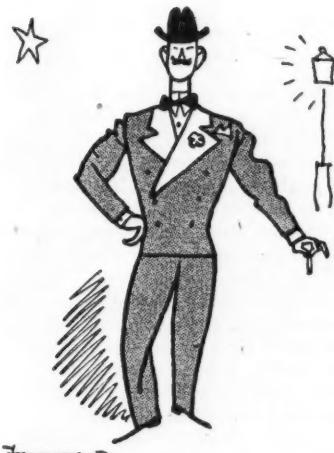
To-morrow, then, it's heigh-ho for Bournemouth and a good long rest.

H. F. E.

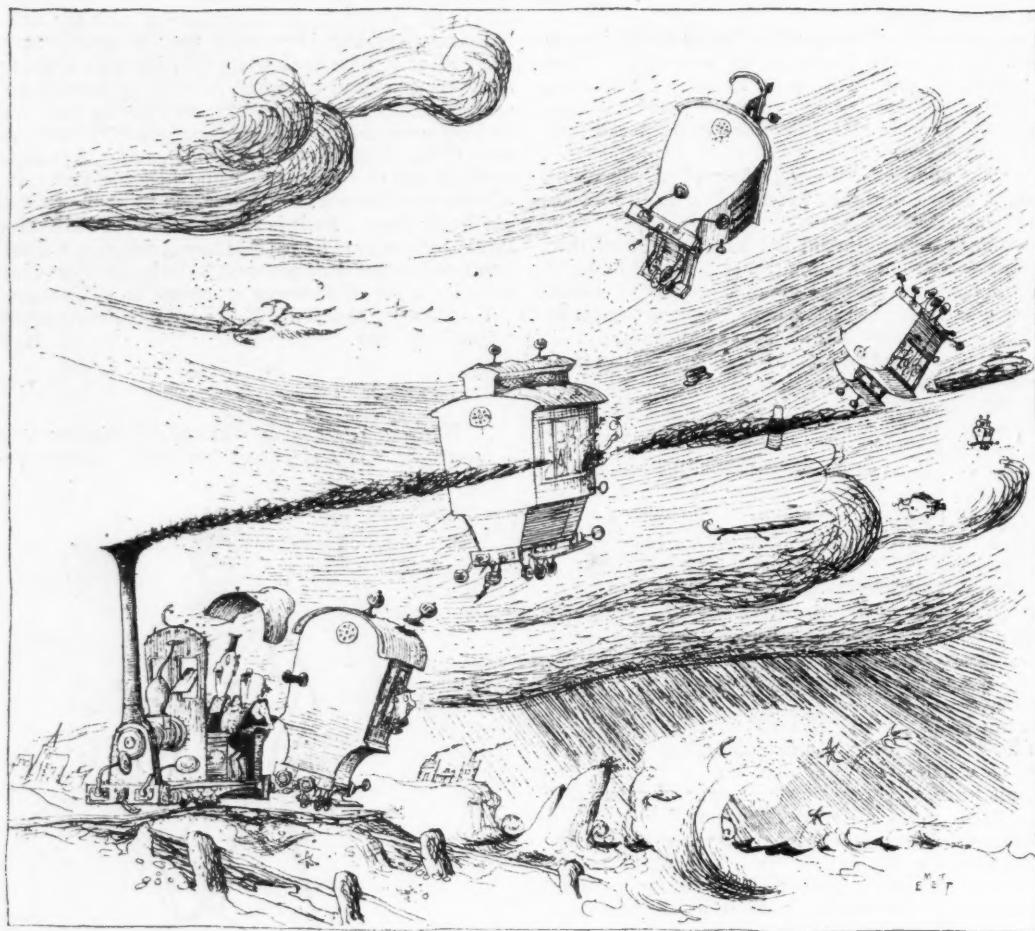
With the return of dressing and with theatres starting soon after six, I very much fear that the advent of—



the reversible suit—



cannot be long delayed.



"Y-e-s . . . there WAS a gale warning on the eight o'clock, but THAT was for shipping."

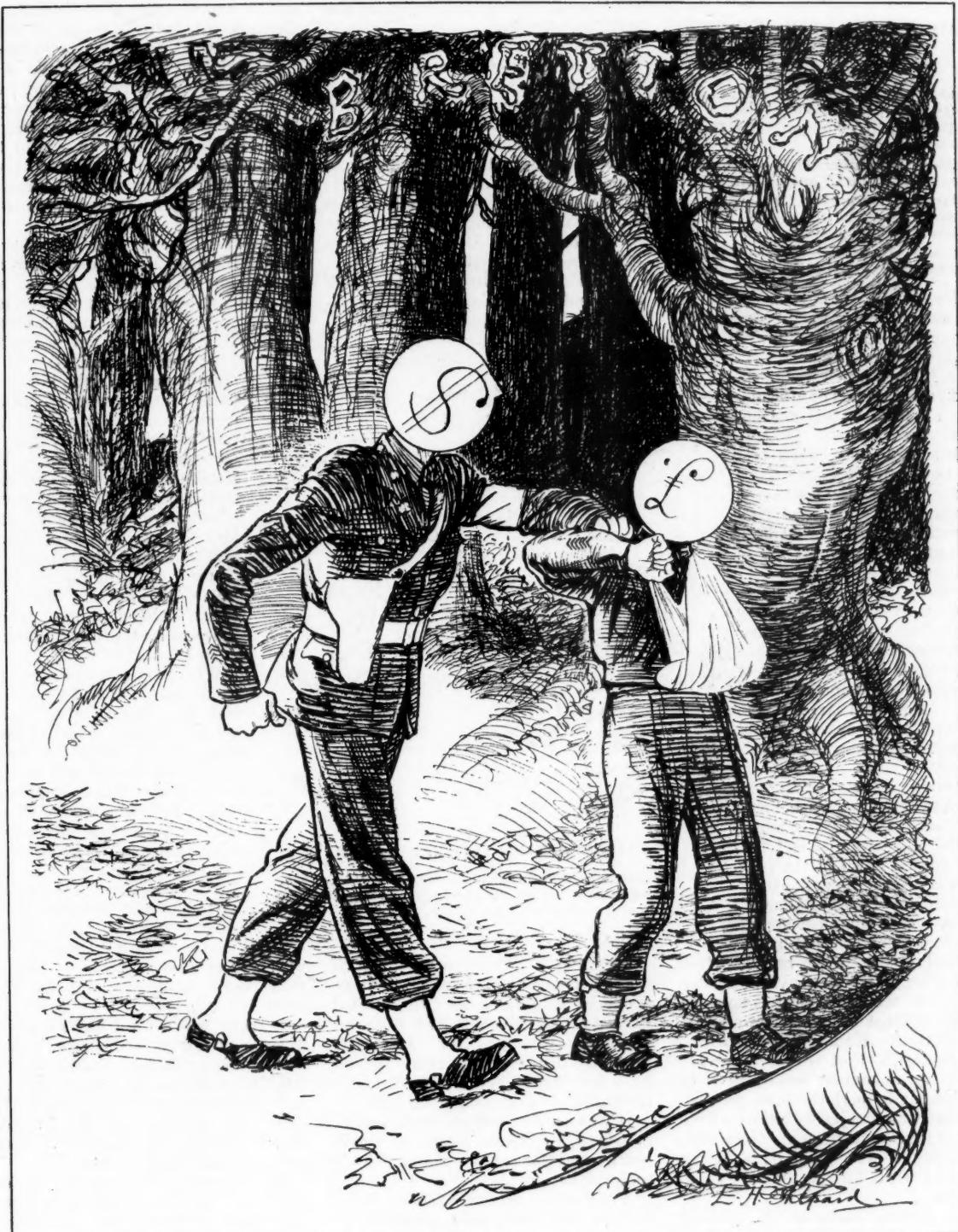
Pardon Me.

ONE has observed, I gather from the Press,
A falling-off in manners, a decay
Of that aloof though searching *politesse*
That marked our conduct in a pre-war day;
He writes of ruthless shoving in the street,
The "you're another's" acid repartee,
Stamping in queues upon a neighbour's feet
And the rude glare where once was "Pardon me."

The cause, he cries, is plain to all who seek.
In the good days of full and healthful food
Such action would have paled the Briton's cheek;
He moved aloofly, but he wasn't rude,
But, with long pining for sustaining fat,
For calories and vitamins and such,
He eyes his fellows darkly; worse than that,
Goes all-sarcastic at the slightest touch.

For this crabbed critic's dietetic views
Much, if one comes to ponder, might be said:
We are not fond of trafficking in queues,
Nor are we, as we would be, nobly fed.
Not ours to crack the egg or greet the steak;
The blessing on a chop is rarely heard;
How stubborn is the cheese, how dry the cake,
How rare the butter. Yet the man has erred.

Our manners are not bad. I rather hold
That in our long stress they have bloomed anew.
We have grown affable who once were cold,
Genial abroad and chatty in the queue.
We do not, as aforetime, range aloof
But with a casual cheer both large and fine,
And if of this the man demands a proof
And seeks brave manners, dash it, look at mine.
DUM-DUM.



THE SNOWDROP

“All right, I'll come quietly. But remember I *did* join up in '39.”

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Monday, December 10th. — House of Lords: Report on Palestine.

House of Commons: The Budget Moves On.

Tuesday, December 11th. — House of Commons: The Finance Bill's Exit.

Wednesday, December 12th. — House of Commons: The Battle of Bretton Woods.

Thursday, December 13th. — House of Commons: The Battle Continues.

Monday, December 10th. — The main business of the day was to pass another stage of the Finance Bill, and this, in due course, was achieved. For a Budget which was introduced amid rounds of applause from all Parties, this one has taken some time.

Their Lordships were told by Lord Jowitt, the Lord Chancellor, that the position in Palestine was grave, and they cheered a suggestion that both Jews and Arabs should aid in restoring law and order.

Tuesday, December 11th. — Mr. GORDON WALKER asked the Prime Minister to-day whether recordings could be made of the proceedings of the House of Commons for subsequent broadcast. "No," said Mr. ATTLEE, "I don't think anyone would listen to a whole day's debate."

Captain RAYMOND BLACKBURN (whose first Parliament this is) modestly inquired whether the proposal had not been turned down in the past because of the low debating standard of previous Parliaments. This comment found no favour among the old hands of the Treasury Bench or elsewhere.

Mr. JACK LAWSON, the War Minister, answered some seventy questions, leaving another thirty unanswered for lack of time. He had so great a wad of typescript that every time he sought an answer it looked as if he were about to perform some particularly intricate conjuring trick—with a dash of juggling thrown in. However, resourceful Minister that he is, he got through with his customary good-humour.

Mr. ATTLEE then, to the general pleasure, announced that the first steps are to be taken towards restoring self-government to Newfoundland. It was the least we could do, he said, to show our gratitude to the gallant little island. Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, leading

the Opposition, also led the cheers this statement aroused.

Mr. Speaker caused a deep depression to centre over—well, certain parts of the House by announcing that, after the recess, any Member who won a place in the ballot for the right to raise a matter on the adjournment should be debarred for four weeks from trying again. Your scribe understands that there is no truth in the report that certain Members plan to bring forward a Law of Averages (Amendment) Bill, 1945.

The Finance Bill was discussed still more, and finally passed. Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer bowed gratefully.



OLIVER ASKING FOR PERMISSION

"Our unfortunate industrialists cannot even blow their own noses without asking the permission of the President of the Board of Trade." —Mr. Oliver Stanley.

Then, in a discussion on Scottish rating, someone got so angry that he spoke of Edinburgh as "the spoiled darling of Scottish cities." Sir WILLIAM DARLING, who sits for that city, promptly disproved the taunt (or did he?) by calling the proposal under discussion a "miserable little Bill."

It was a debate where Scots rushed in where Sassenachs feared to tread, but we had (for once) a comparatively early night.

Wednesday, December 12th. — Members who had been walking around the place with bulky tomes in their hands and deep furrows in their brows, hurried into the House to-day, eager for the fray on that most abstruse and mysterious of all subjects—the Gold Standard. Nominally, the subject of

debate was the loan the United States Government is to give us of some £1,100,000,000, to enable us to trade, now that lend-lease has ended. But, said the critics—in tones varying from tearful pleading to ferocious denunciation—by agreeing to adopt the Bretton Woods Monetary Plan as part of the bargain we were committing ourselves to go back to the Gold Standard, fluctuations of the £, crucifixion on a Cross of Gold, and all that.

Not at all, boomed the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. HUGH DALTON—not at all! We were as free as air, as pure as the driven snow, as unattached to gold as war-time jewellery.

But the critics did not share his views, and said so. Their arguments made the less clear parts of the theory of atomic energy seem child's-play, but they ploughed steadily on, and no one stopped them. Mr. RICHARD STOKES (six feet and strident), Mr. NORMAN SMITH (diminutive and dogmatic) and Mr. ROBERT BOOTHBY (burly and banker-like) had appointed themselves generals of the Anti-Gold forces, and the entire Cabinet ranged themselves under the Gold Standard, so to speak.

What a disrespectful person once called the "Punditti" had the time of their lives, holding strong points (and, one suspects, not a few weak ones) with the aid of a deadly hail of technicalities. Now and then a layman would walk on to the battle-field, as cattle were known to stroll between the contending armies in the Battle of Europe. The results, for the laymen, were much the same as those which befell the "coo" which tried conclusions

with the early railway trains. But, to their credit be it said, this did not deter the laymen.

It really was a most learned affair. There was talk of overdrafts, fundamental disequilibrium, convertibility, inflation, deflation, and even reflation. Some Members seemed to think the loan a good idea and the Bretton Woods plan a bad one, some took precisely the opposite view.

Mr. DALTON, advocating the two on behalf of the Government, insisted that Bretton Woods bore no resemblance to the Gold Standard, but Mr. ROBERT BOOTHBY, moving the rejection of both loan and Plan, asserted that the resemblance was close and remarkable—that, in fact, Mr. Jekyll Bretton-Woods and Dr. Hyde Gold



"Psst! Mister!—want to buy a pound of tea?"

Standard were one and the same. Mr. CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS was tragic about it all, and declared that the whole thing was an Anglo-American suicide pact.

It was Mr. WILLIE GALLACHER, the Communist leader, who simplified the whole matter by reducing it to terms of pawnbroking and loans to pay the rent. Perhaps he over-simplified it a trifle, for the experts who had all along worn an expression of learned discernment took on looks of puzzlement, while the hitherto puzzled looked happy and knowledgeable.

However, he seemed to find the explanation clear in his own mind, and, when he sat down, Sir THOMAS MOORE had just time to remark that he (Sir THOMAS) "had the temerity . . . when the clock overtook him, and the House adjourned.

Question-time had been chiefly notable for an announcement from the War Minister, Mr. JACK LAWSON, that the Home Guard, which was stood down, after nearly five years' service, some thirteen months ago, is now to be disbanded. He added, amid cheers led by Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL, that the nation thanked the Home Guard

for its willing service at the time of Britain's darkest hour.

Turning smartly to the right, saluting, counting three, and walking briskly off the parade-ground, the Home Guard millions doubtless grinned their thanks. Their representatives in the House merely grinned appreciatively.

Thursday, December 13th.—The great debate on gold and Bretton Woods and loans went on. It seemed even more learned than before, and it retained that strange air of friendly controversy that had distinguished it from its opening. Members differed strongly, but—oh! so very politely. It was rather as if the debate was being held in one of the more old-fashioned drawing-rooms.

There was, in fact, the appropriate iciness in the atmosphere, when Mr. ROBERT BOOTHBY, pouting in the correct Victorian style, complained that Mr. MORRISON was "gagging the House" and breaking his promise that there would be ample debate.

When Mr. BOOTHBY had wilted to the requisite degree, Mr. MORRISON leaped up and called his statement "perfectly untrue and gratuitous." It

was, moreover (complained this master slogan-maker), a mere slogan-making observation.

And so the House passed to winding-up speeches by Mr. CHURCHILL and Mr. BEVIN, and then to the vote, which was taken in an atmosphere of great excitement.

Result: For the Government (and with it the Bretton Woods plan and the loan) 345; against, 98.

The Conservatives split in half. Splinters from the Government side voted against the Government.

And so history was made once more in this history-making Parliament of ours. The objectors turned their attention forlornly to the technicalities of the Bill necessary to give effect to the Bretton Woods scheme. No doubt this too will pass.

• •

East Indies Fashion Note

"The streets are shaded with trees. Every half-mile there is a police-box. In it is a gong, a hollowed log five feet long, used for telling the hours and giving warning of fires, and a long forked stick for pinning to the round men who run amuck."

Evening paper.

Topsy Turvy

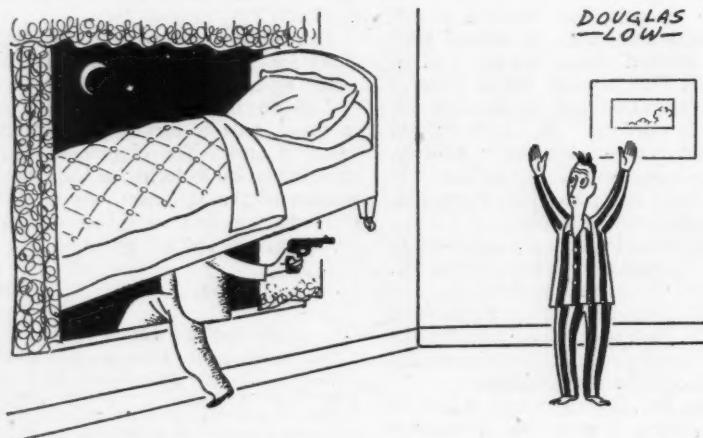
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TRIX darling, I grovel about the pencil, not to mention the *squalid* paper, and I shouldn't wonder if this actual *letter* turned out a shade miscellaneous and disordinated, when I tell you where I am, my dear I'm waiting in the Central Hall at the House while Haddock seeks a seat in the Gallery for me, which I gather is *practically* prohibitive, my dear you've *no* conception of the *multitudinous* conditions in this place now, it is *actually* the National Home for *Queues*, because you know for *years* past the populace have snuffed and snooted at the *whole* institution, it was the *gas-works* and the *talking-shop* and such, and every Member was a *septic politician*, my dear the *meanest* category of personnel, in fact during the late conflict as Haddock used to say, it *sometimes* sounded as if the Populace had *no* use for what they were *fighting* for, if you see what I mean, however now that the Populace have swamped the polls all's well it seems, *too* erroneous of course but *satisfactory*, my dear there's a *sedentary* queue of constituents *all* down St. Stephen's Hall which is *exactly* like a *refrigerator* except for statues of Burke and Pitt and even they have small *calory* value, sometimes Haddock says the queue *expands* standing into the street outside, *all* this my dear to hear the whiffings of the *septic* politician in the gashouse or *talking-shop*, *too* as it should be but not un-laughworthy, while in the *Chamber* it seems the Members have to *queue* up to

the Sergeant-at-Arms, or should that be spelt with a j, I believe it's the done thing, with the same weird purpose, and as for where I am, my dear it's like *market-day* at Burbleton or Bisbury, I haven't seen any *cows* but *quite* congested, you can't move for all these *herds* of electors waiting to extract their Members with *Green Cards* and humble petitions, *rather* stirring as Haddock says because it shows the *interest* but a *shade* fraying for the battered *Members*, because of course it may be the *one* debate they ought to hear and instead they have to hither-and-thither for tickets or tea, *during* which somebody in the Chamber is saying *carbolically* I'm *surprised* not to see the Hon. Member in his *place* and so forth, and by the way Haddock says the amount of *superfluous* carbolic about is *too* synthetic and boring, my dear you know how they always say that the start of a new Parliament is *exactly* like a new term at a Public school, well my dear he showed me one of the *Members'* telephone boxes where *two* days after the opening someone had written on the wall in *block* letters *200 TORIES CAN'T BE RIGHT*, at which he thought Well the new term is starting with a bang, but my dear the *next* day it seems someone had rubbed out the *T* in *CAN'T* so that it *now* read *200 TORIES CAN, etc.*, and the *next* day the *T* was back again, the last thing was that someone wrote rather pom-pously underneath it, *Please see notice about defacing walls*, then someone scratched the whole saga out, *too*

adolescent don't you think, however so far Haddock says there've been *no* rude pictures or hearts with arrows through them *yet*, though some fiery fellow did draw a hammer and sickle in the dust over one of the lavs, but that perhaps was some volcanic *visitor*, and by the way I don't think I ever told you about the *one* disconcertment we had in Copenhagen, my dear after Haddock had been interviewed by *quite* all the papers who were *too* nice and non-violent, he happened to see in one of them a column with a heading which *looked* like *Stories about Haddock*, *too* right, because my dear a friendly Dane interpreting it seems they'd attributed to my *blameless* Haddock three or four of those *antique* practical *joke* stories about the *renowned* practical joker Horace somebody I can *not* recall his name, my dear it was Haddock we understand they said who dug the *largest* hole in Whitehall and was a pest to the traffic for *simply* days *pretending* my dear to be someone from the gas or Water Board, likewise it was *Haddock* we believe who gave his stop-watch to Sir *John Simon*, challenged him to run down a piece of Piccadilly in so many seconds and *when* he had started yelled *Stop thief he's got my watch*, my dear *John Simon* of all people can you imagine it, and can you *conceive* our blushes, because my dear if there is a thing my sunny spouse has *never* done it's practical *jokery*, *too* infantile we've *always* thought, and *now* my dear in a strange city on a *goodwill* mission, my dear we *scarcely* dared to emerge at *all* for fear the *police* would be watching us, though of course in the late conflict there was *no* sort of practical mockery the Danes did *not* do to the *septic Germans*, my dear one man put an advertisement in the paper *Quantities* of second-hand furniture to sell *Ring* number so-and-so, the said number being the telenumber of the *Gestapo*, who my dear went *utterly* bats answering applications for beds and wardrobes and could *not* ring Hitler or anyone up for *days*, so it may be they thought that Haddock's alleged antics were part of a *Resistance Movement* and took a Christian view.

Well, here I am still, darling and *no* Haddock, a lonely cork on the animated sea, but my dear I could sit here for *days* it's *so* human, my dear the *pathetic* constituents whose Members are *not* here, or can't come out perhaps, my dear like *dogs* waiting for the front door to



open, too forlorn, and then of course the Members hither-and-thithering manfully my dear with that sort of destiny air they all have, bless them, as if D Day might be any minute, the dank thing is that nowadays I know so few of them, and snooping down at us of course those appealing little stone kings and queens on all the walls, talking of snooping my dear I've just given rather a glacial grin to Mr. Ferret, I'll tell you later perhaps, however what I was saying was that after all I am sitting in the absolute bosom of the Mother of P's, half-way between the Lords and Commons, and just where the People come to meet the Parliament, my dear through the door I can just see Mr. Pitt at the other end of St. Stephen's Hall and opposite him is the enormous Mr. Fox, too alarming, and my dear it is rather moving to think that that is exactly where they used to jaw and jangle in the aged days, when it was Pitt not Winston, though of course I definitely can not envisage that they had half the coping to do that we have, my dear have you the faintest notion what Burnham

Woods is about, and then this quite inscrutable Loan, Haddock says he rather thinks that he may vote against it because it's the one thing that may stop him smoking at last and he could hardly care less if there were no more films, though I dare say there is a little more in it than that, my dear there's that Mr. Ferret again who Haddock thinks may be one of the pseudo-squad, it seems that some of the Members have taken to writing articles about this place in the bilious weeklies under false names, my dear too pompous and inflated names like *Judex*, *Liberator* or *Titus Oates*, and some of them say the most corrosive things about the other Members, which Haddock thinks if it's the done thing it's time it wasn't, because he says however hot the argy-bargy in the Chamber the done thing is to be fair and frank outside, and even in, well I mean on the whole you don't chew up a chap who's not there, and anyhow it's all quite public, so the other chap can bang you back perhaps, next time, moreover after a banging-match you can always meet over a noggin in the Smoking-room

and bang it out again in friendly fashion, when of course you may remember all the things you forgot to say before and so forth, which in the old days he says led to many amiable battles between the incompatibles, whereas now it seems you may be standing a chap a double whisky to-night when last week he called you a vested interest a reactionary what-not or Fascist lackey, not he says that that would matter if only you knew, because then you could buy him another whisky and matily explain just where he was erroneous, though personally I should save my Scotch for someone who had not called me a vested interest or even a reactionary what-not, but that I know is not the Commons way of life, and I must say there may be something in what Haddock says because here I am in a dubious state about poor Mr. Ferret, who may not be one of the pseudo-squad at all, and at one time I rather thought that he was rather attracted, oh dear, here's Haddock at last, farewell your devoted Topsy.

A. P. H.



NORMAN MANSBRIDGE



"Just wait a second, Mrs. Smith—I shan't be a minute."

Wirrk

THE reader who has guessed this to be an article in dialect about work may read on, happy in the knowledge that it was a bad guess.

"Wirrk" is the nearest translation I can achieve of the cautionary sound emitted by my chiming clock about a minute before its more pleasant notes greet the ear. It is a sort of "stand-to" before the guard turns out.

It was this "wirrk" that arrested my attention as I was crossing the hall at 6.14 P.M. I glanced at my watch, set by the "pips" at 6 o'clock, and saw that the hall clock was three minutes fast. So I opened the face of the clock and pushed the hand back three minutes.

The clock chimed the half-hour and struck two.

* * * * *

This little row of stars, borrowed from Mr. Punch's printer for the purpose of indicating a pause in the continuity, is really inadequate. What is wanted to do justice to the occasion is a Lunch Interval.

It has been calculated (by me) that if the surprise effect of a clock chiming the half-hour and striking two while its hands point to 6.11

could be translated into military strategy, the atomic bomb would no longer count as an effective weapon of offence.

The immediate effect of this behaviour by a clock is similar to that obtained by breaking the Worcester butter-dish. There is an immediate mental acceptance of the thing as irrevocable, and the mind turns to "What will happen next?" as a possible means of escape.

Now with a clock that behaves as mentioned there is very little in its character to give confidence. It may, and then it may not . . .

But this state of suspense does not last long, for, as the reader will appreciate, the odd behaviour having taken place at 6.11 P.M., only four minutes have to elapse before the clock is due to make some legitimate announcement to the world.

At 6.15 this not-so-particular clock chimed the three-quarters and left it at that.

* * * * *

We can call that a Tea Interval, for every minute is precious now if we are to get the clock right before, at 6.29, it emits another "wirrk," preparatory to making a perfect ass of itself.

At one moment I had an idea that by pushing the minute hand back each time the clock went "wirrk" I could get the striking arrangements to catch up with the timekeeping. I abandoned this on the grounds that it was

- (a) going to cause the family to collect, and questions to be asked;
- (b) bad for the clock, and
- (c) merely a theory and probably silly.

It was at 6.25 that inspiration came. I could wait until 6.30, note what happened, and then take off the hands, replacing them to show the time declared by the chimes. Next, stop the clock until G.M.T. had caught up with it, and there you are!

At 6.30 it chimed nicely and struck seven.

I took the hands off.

I now found that the centre bit was square, and so were the holes in the hands.

To save you all a lot of trouble, let me assure you that this means the hands will go back only in fixed ways. The minute hand fitted nicely when pointed to the hour, or the quarters. The hour hand, removed when midway between 6 and 7, refused to go back anywhere else except between 9 and 10, 12 and 1, or 3 and 4.

I should have compromised with "nearest to seven o'clock" had I not lost a very small metal cap thing with a little square hole in the centre, and a minute taper pin which keep the hands in place.

At 6.45 the clock chimed the quarter. It showed no time at all.

I have dropped the hour hand somewhere.

○ ○

To Help the Children

To readers still searching for an inexpensive present guaranteed to give pleasure, Mr. Punch recommends *Voices on the Green* published by MICHAEL JOSEPH at 10/6. Children are at once the inspiration and the object of this book. Collected here are the writings, directly or indirectly concerned with childhood and our responsibilities to it, of over thirty distinguished authors, together with a number of attractive wood engravings by well-known artists. The generosity of authors, artists, publishers and printers has enabled the entire profits of the book to be devoted to St. Mary's Hospitals for Women and Children, Manchester. So who gives this book gives twice.

At the Play

"BRAND" (A.D.C. CAMBRIDGE)

WHEN the A.D.C. courageously decided to put this on they were faced with five acts, all in verse which, though it interpreted the passion of the big scenes competently if without brilliance, was beset with formidable man-traps such as

"... But if you trod
This path a Dean to boot,
or Bishop,
By dawn there'd be a
corpse to fish up . . ."
and
"When the old parish
church was brought
In earnest to the point of
rubble:
Some held it was in-
violable,"

or with the more straightforward translation of Mr. WILLIAM WILSON. Mr. JOHN PRUDHOE, the producer, has adapted the latter, his script being in prose in three acts. To bring the play down to workable proportions he has had to cut, and cut heavily; but while he must have all our sympathy for sacrificing the long opening scene on the mountain where *Brand* with his uncompromising thunderbolts breaks up the pretty dreams of *Agnes* and *Einar*, it is doubtful if without its guide anyone who had not read the play would fully understand what *Brand* stands for. *Brand* dominates everything, he is the play, and the margin between his appearing the inspired revolutionary of IBSEN's creation or merely a boor beating his head against a wall is not so wide that an audience deprived of the sign-posts in the first act is safe to find its way.

But in the great scenes in which *Brand* treads the bitter path of renunciation and at last, in the finest passage of the play, learns from *Agnes* the true meaning of his creed of All or Nothing, there is not much mistaking IBSEN's intention. The ceaseless struggle in the pastor's soul as he chokes back the compassion which would distort truth, torturing himself to the point at which, as Shaw said, the very mountains themselves stone him, is well brought out by Mr. RICHARD BEBB-WILLIAMS. He has a

fine voice and a good presence, and though he could not be expected to possess quite the emotional range demanded by such a part, he tackles it roundly. Miss ANN MANKOWITZ plays *Agnes* with feeling and comes through the ordeal of the final scene in the hut with credit; she must, however, learn to pitch up her voice.

IBSEN's humour, a notable headache to any producer of his plays, is liberally interpreted, and Mr. ANTHONY KNOWLES' fleshly *Provost* and Mr.

of brilliant Mediterranean sunlight in a play which describes so vividly the horrors of the frozen North. A touch of grey in the cyclorama and an occasional burst of canned blizzard would make Little Ulf's rapid decline more circumstantial. But all in all the A.D.C. may congratulate themselves on a bold venture bravely accomplished.

ERIC.

"WORM'S EYE VIEW" (EMBASSY)

Here be erks. There is not an adjutant in the R.A.F. but will recognize instantly the high-principled young corporal with Shelley in his pocket, the quiet paternal L.A.C. from the last war, the cheerful villain with only one idea in his head and—a bad type, may be, but worth his weight in Naafi rations—the Cockney scrounger. Nor is there an intelligent playgoer who will not as quickly recognize the landlady's daughter to whom love comes like a sunrise by Turner (see the high-principled corporal), and the hen-pecked husband stung at last into staging a palace revolution which sweeps all before it.

This is not the *Journey's End* of this war but a light sentimental comedy mixed according to one of the oldest and most popular English recipes. It is about life in a bad billet, at a resort called "Sandcombe." (The identity of this place will not be concealed from the R.A.F., which has cause to remember gratefully a coastal town—where they have Wakes weeks and speak music-hall—for the way it accepted an

invasion second only to D Day.) A triple-distilled shrew of a landlady wages war on her lighthearted billettes until her sadly unconvinial son collects one of the most satisfactory black eyes that can ever have delighted an audience.

Mr. R. F. DELDERFIELD has written a lively, winning little comedy which should be intelligible even to the other Services. The wisecracks are bright and it has a simple, domestic charm. Mr. RONALD SHINER, who also produced, is outstanding from a good cast as the man from Petticoat Lane to whom life is a black market pantomime. He is really very funny. ERIC.



SKY-LARKERS IN SERIOUS MOOD

Pop	MR. JACK HOBBES
Porter	MR. RONALD SHINER
Taffy	MR. ERIC DAVIES
Mark	MR. JOHN VARLEY
Bella	MISS DIANA DAWSON

MICHAEL GRIFFITH-JONES' bumbling *Mayor* draw hearty laughter. So also does the scene in which *Brand* haggles by messenger with his *Mother* (Miss CLERE BRIGGS) who lies dying; when the old lady makes her last concession, except death, and sportingly offers to buy salvation with nine-tenths of her property, it seems to me that nothing but consciously anaesthetic acting could prevent it being hilarious.

Mr. PRUDHOE's crowd scenes are animated and his avalanche earthy as you could wish. Perhaps it is a pity that all the resources of the A.D.C.'s exceptional lighting set should be mobilized to provide an atmosphere



"And they're so strongly made it'll last him a lifetime."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

The Coastal Forces

As a publication *The Battle of the Narrow Seas* (COUNTRY LIFE, 15/-), by Lieut.-Commander PETER SCOTT, M.B.E., D.S.C. and Bar, R.N.V.R., is impressive in its generosity. There are, besides maps and photographs, twelve coloured reproductions of the author's oil paintings and eight of his excellent portrait-drawings. As a story it is even more generous, for Lieut.-Commander SCOTT not only gives full honour where honour is due but shows how well his companions, who manned the Motor Torpedo Boats, Motor Gunboats and little Motor Launches ("maids of all work" of the sea) operating throughout the war in the Channel and the North Sea, could render it to each other and even, occasionally, to the enemy. Many of the encounters, as well as the raids on St. Nazaire and Dieppe, are described, and we are left to imagine the boredom of the long cold patrols when nothing happened at all. Because of its great material, the book would be thrilling if it could have been written by a hack office observer, but the author writes beautifully, and mind, heart and soul have gone to the making of this record. To write as simply, directly and seriously about his own friends—men whose great responsibilities forced them into early maturity—and this with no trace of forced nonchalance or any sort of self-consciousness, is an achievement. He suggests that when we have finished the book we should turn to a few sentences at the beginning—"When war comes to a country there is only one course for its people to take, and that is to fight as hard as they can . . ." And—"Nothing will ever compensate us for the men we have lost, not even the way so many of them died."

B. E. B.

My Soul My Own

In spite of the baronial "CRONIN" on the jacket, *The Green Years* (GOLLANZ, 9/6) is the least arrogant and most sympathetic of Dr. A. J. CRONIN's novels. Its theme is a youthful, lower-middle-class, Scottish variant of the burden of Browning's Bishop Blougram—will you have faith shaken by doubt, or doubt shaken by faith? Its hero is a derelict Irish orphan, bred a Catholic and plunged at the age of eight into the embittered Orange world of his shabby Lowland relatives. Robie Shannon finds himself billeted in the congested outskirts of an engineering town on a respectable Presbyterian family. But he shares a bed with Grandpa, a genial and imaginative old wastrel whose escapades come as a relief after the mean decorum of the rest. The scales between discipline and anarchy are held pretty level throughout the typically agonizing schooldays of a sensitive and talented boy, until the Catholic priest, who has hitherto kept Robie in the fold, is confronted by a budding biologist's loss of faith and replies that "the intellectual approach to God is madness." The sequel to this pastoral lapse is episodically if not philosophically interesting; and its mellow handling gives its sombre scenes and characters the distinction of a good piece of genre-painting.

H. P. E.

The Nineteen-Thirties

In *The Condemned Playground* (ROUTLEDGE, 10/6) Mr. CYRIL CONNOLLY has collected critical articles, parodies and satires, written for the most part in the nineteen-thirties, though there are a few of later date, and a perceptive estimate of Sterne from as early as 1927. It is a very interesting and often entertaining book, which gives a fuller and on the whole truer picture of the author's mind and character than the more elaborate and self-conscious attempt at self-portraiture contained in *The Unquiet Grave*. The condemned playground of the title is "the period of ebullience, mediocrity, frivolity and talent during which I wrote most of these essays and my first two books." When the period opened Mr. CONNOLLY was in his early twenties, and, as his articles on Joyce and Gide show, writing with a greater glow and with less circumspection than in later years. Since then, he says, he has somehow come off the boil, perhaps because the age was decadent and he was decaying with it. This is too vague an explanation. Mr. CONNOLLY's chief weakness is that he is always trying to keep abreast of the intellectual fashion of the moment. It is the latest ideas and youngest writers by whom he is most impressed, as is evident in the curious assumption implicit in "Weaver . . . though several years younger than Auden and MacNeice . . . is completely dominated by them." There is a frontispiece drawing by Augustus John of Mr. CONNOLLY which is perhaps not altogether satisfactory.

H. K.

A-Roving, A-Roving

Why have we been so slow to assemble *The Best Short Stories of the Sea* (FABER, 10/6)? Not only has the sea seen us at our most adventurous and successful: it has shown us spiritually triumphant in defeat itself. At least half of Mr. THOMAS WOODROFFE's twenty-six narratives reveal "many a sorrowful day and unquiet sleepes" as a condition of sea-faring. They lay behind the sighting of "good old Grimsby" by a holed Iceland trawler, just as they lay behind the Tilbury docking of an Elizabethan buccaneer. Fiction and fact re-echo each other throughout the series, for the greater part is of sound nineteenth-century workmanship. Joseph Conrad's "The Brute" is perhaps the best study in ship-personality ever penned. After it H. M. Tomlinson's

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"The Sinking of the *Titanic*" strikes one, in its artful economy, as an extreme rebound from the American magniloquence of Hermann Melville's "Death of the White Whale." Autobiography furnishes Henry Teonge, a Caroline Naval Chaplain, and William Bradford, a diarist among the Pilgrim Fathers; straight history the salvaging of "The *Egypt's Gold*," by David Scott, and the editor's own account of Bligh of the *Bounty*. The result is a very fine book, a book to remind ourselves, and everyone else, what we most memorably stand for in life and letters.

H. P. E.

Literary Delikatesen

Dear Baby (FABER, 6/-) is the latest collection of the work of that tantalizing author, Mr. WILLIAM SAROYAN. According to taste he can be described either as a gifted surrealist lapsing regrettably into first-class story-telling or as a born writer of the sketch who drifts unpredictably towards the moon. The title-piece is about a boxer obliged to go through with the empty triumph of a big fight after the death of his girl, and one can only say of it that with a few sharp words Mr. SAROYAN digs right down into human nature. The sorrow he finds there is profound. But then there is "I Know You Good," a mosaic of shining irrelevances which leaves the impression that Mr. SAROYAN would have reached the same goal if he had done a set of coffee-cups out of a sealskin toque or a beautiful painting of an eighteen-pounder shooting ice creams at the sun. There is also the mad but inspired and Grouchoesque dialogue between Mr. SAROYAN and his barber on the ethics of admitting that war has broken out; the wickedly observant, extraordinarily compressed *reportage* of "Highway America," the diary of a motor-tour; a philosophic essay, "How Is It To Be?", nostalgic and suggestive, pinned to the death of George Gershwin; a brilliant fantasy about a man with D.T. who trains his pink mouse to remove cash from hotel dressing-tables; and a lot of other pieces so varied in shape and intention that one wonders more than ever what the central Mr. SAROYAN can be like. You will laugh and cry over this book, and you may want to throw it out of the window, but you never will.

E. O. D. K.

In Praise of Animals

The object of Miss M. M. JOHNSON in *These Also* (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 9/-) is, by suitable quotations from our literature, to "create a wider awareness of the beauty and perfection, physical and moral, of all those creatures other than human who share and glorify this earth with us." Miss JOHNSON opens with birds—Shelley's skylark, Thomas Hardy's darkling thrush, Spenser's Phoenix, Cowper's holy dove, Clare's Little Trotty wagtail, and many others. Then we pass to Creatures of the Wild—badgers, squirrels, otters; and to Small Fry, which include bats, hedgehogs and water-voles. Wild Beasts are briefly dealt with; here is a tribute to the kindness of the lion from Chaucer, Blake's poem on the tiger, a story of how Saint Francis tamed a wolf, and a few other equally reassuring items. This rather awkward corner rounded, Miss JOHNSON comes to Frog and Fish, etc., the etc. covering snakes, who show up quite well in the not too realistic treatment accorded them by Edmund Spenser, Keats and Coleridge. The section entitled Living Treasure deals with domestic pets: dogs, cats, squirrels, hares and pet lambs. Pigs, cart-horses, goats, sheep and oxen are assembled under Farmyard Fellowship; and the anthology concludes with a section entitled Man on his Throne, in which man's cruelty and callousness in his dealings with the brute creation are castigated. This is

a volume which can be read with pleasure by a cheerful fire in a temperate zone, but might seem irrelevant and even exasperating to anyone lost in the jungle. H. K.

The Uncrowned King of Chelsea

To have a painter revealed by a painter is a rare and exhilarating experience. The *Life, Work and Setting of Philip Wilson Steer* (FABER, 25/-), by Mr. D. S. MACCOLL, is, whether you like the life, the work, the setting—or the set—or not, one of the best painters' books since Vasari. Painting, to Steer, was "a job like any other, something one has to do between meals"; and the salt of this biography, to which everyone left of his circle must have contributed, is its absorbing interest in paint. One may believe, and strangely enough Steer's colleague Tonks did so, that "the effect of French painting on English has been fatal"—that the English Impressionists took a wrong turning. But what fun they had on the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire! It is their joy in workmanship, not their wit, which was obscene and dull, that sparkles in these pages. Steer himself, stolid and taciturn, devoted to (1) his old nurse, (2) the cat of the moment, (3) the set, could sum up his aims in aphorisms that reek of linseed oil and "turps." The complete specialist, intellectually sustained and spiritually almost choked by paint, he could truthfully tell a sitter, "I am not a portrait painter, but if you like I will do a small landscape of you." H. P. E.

English Opera

In *Opera in English*, the first of the "Sadler's Wells Opera Books" (JOHN LANE, 2/6 each), TYRONE GUTHRIE states the lamentable fact that English opera is "in the position of an art gallery whose most modern pictures are by Sargent, or a library whose newest novel is *The Forsyte Saga*"—and foreign Sargents and Galsworthys at that. The recent successful production of an all-British opera, Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, does not alter the fundamental situation, for to quote the composer himself "the scarcity of modern British operas is due to the limited opportunities that are offered for their performance." And even composers must eat. There are, however, a few slender rays of hope piercing this *Operadämmerung*, which has persisted ever since the importation of Italian opera in the eighteenth century. One is the fact that several of our most gifted composers are risking starvation and writing operas, and another is that the State, in the form of C.E.M.A., has begun to take a hand by giving limited guarantees against loss to certain enterprises. Yet another—and perhaps the most important—is the undoubtedly interest in opera of many thousands of young people in this country. The Sadler's Wells Opera Books are designed to spread an understanding of the operas in the Wells repertoire, and to help to popularize opera in general. The three operas so far dealt with are *Madame Butterfly*, *Cosi fan Tutte* and *Peter Grimes*. The books are informative, well illustrated and well produced.

D. C. B.

Late Choice for Christmas

Among attractive and inexpensive books for Christmas are the "Faber Gallery" series of colour reproductions of great paintings with explanatory notes. Available up to date are *Florentine Paintings*, *Blake*, *Music in Painting* and *Degas* (FABER, 6/- each). The series is published under the general supervision of Mr. R. H. WILENSKI, and includes many pictures which have never hitherto been reproduced in colour.



"Now remember, before twelve o'clock it isn't in yet, and after that it's sold out."

My Lifetime in Basic Industry

VI—The Cleansing of Scowle

DR. WARBURTON came to Scowle with high ideals and a bundle of prejudices. Forty years ago the science or art of healing (call it what you will) was tentative and empirical. There were no cures then for many of the diseases which the modern doctor just laughs at. The medicos of the period ranged themselves against squalor and disease armed with scientific half-truths and old wives' tales. And poor Dr. Warburton was no better than the rest.

His appointment at Scowle included the portfolios of doctor, dentist and sanitary inspector, and he was granted no assistance. He began badly of course. His numerous innovations and his outspoken condemnation of many of Scowle's oldest customs and

practices made him very unpopular. He produced statistics to prove that more deaths occurred from poisoning contracted by chewing cheap shag tobacco than through accidents at the coal-face. He told the miners that their whippets carried tick and pestilence and that drinking even in moderation rotted the valves of the heart. He even tried to stop the women of Scowle from jettisoning their slops from bedroom windows.

The first time Dr. Warburton visited our cottage was when my sister Madge had influenza. He came uninvited, for my mother was deeply suspicious of "ealing from t' book," as she called it, and preferred her own herbal remedies. We were all at home at the time; as a precautionary measure

my mother had dosed us all with a vile concoction known as "Black Jonto," which kept us more or less *in situ*.

My father opened the door and tied up the doctor's pony while my mother came running from the back-yard where she had been feeding the hens. When she saw the doctor my mother stopped running and walked forward slowly, her hands on her hips. Dr. Warburton scented his danger.

"What a pleasure it is, to be sure, ma'am," he said, "to see such a beautifully-kept house. Why, I do believe I could eat my meals off this floor."

"Aye, Doctor Warburton," my mother said, "but t' will be a mortal long time afore tha' t invited, lad,

floor or no floor. Ah'll 'ave no truck wi' thy kind i' this 'ouse."

And although my father protested, she opened the door and handed Dr. Warburton his hat. But just as the miserable fellow was swinging himself into the saddle she opened the door again.

"Ere," she said, "Ah'll tell thee what Ah'll do wi' thee. If tha'st th' mind tha can 'ave a go at ol' Ebby 'ere. 'E's 'bout as muez as Ah can afford t' lose."

My mother's strange concession pleased us all. The doctor accepted the challenge very willingly; he realized of course, as did my mother, that his future in Scowle depended on what he made of his new patient.

Old Ebby himself was less happy about the experiment. Over the years he had grown to respect his chronic lumbago. It was his sure shield against bond-service; it left him the freest man in Scowle. Without his lumbago my grandfather would have had no time for his rain-gauge or his gadgets.

As soon as Dr. Warburton began his treatment old Ebby took to his bed and announced that he was sinking. My mother pulled down the blinds and aired our mourning clothes.

I was only nine years old at the time, but I can still recall every line of the doctor's haggard face. And I can still hear my grandfather's thin voice as he called repeatedly to my mother.

"Rosie, luv," he would whine, "th' mon's killin' me, slow but sure. Sen' im 'way, luv, sen' im 'way."

But my mother hardened her heart and stuck to her bargain. She put her duty to Scowle first. The village might never again have so good a chance of getting rid of the interloper. It was all very complicated.

Once, Dr. Warburton sat up with old Ebby all through the night. He intended, I think, to use violence, to strangle the old man in his bed if he refused to admit the efficacy of the treatment. But as he sat brooding, listening to the jabberwocky of old Ebby's simulated delirium, Dr. Warburton had a new idea. He leaned over the bed and put his mouth to my grandfather's ear.

"How would you like to be my official dispenser, you rascal?" he said.

Old Ebby opened his eyes and a big grin spread across his face. At five o'clock in the morning the pact was sealed with a handshake. At seven-thirty old Ebby came down to breakfast and announced himself as fit as a fiddle.

And so it was that Dr. Warburton

came through his probationary year with flying colours. From the moment of his patient's recovery he was respected and obeyed. He developed a bedside manner that suited Scowle admirably. He called a spade a spade and a heart a heart—never a "ticker." He pronounced judgment in long scientific words that sounded ominous or fatal, so that the women of Scowle felt they were getting full value from their weekly contributions to the Frobisher Mutual Benevolent Society. And, more important, he made himself really useful on his rounds. Mrs. Hunslett, the checkweighman's wife, swore that he flanneled a back as deftly as anyone in Scowle.

And what of old Ebby? He was blissfully happy down at the dispensary. He loved the bright colours of the medicines. He loved to hear the liquids gurgle through the funnel as he made up his tonics. He made them up well too—but then he had been doing much the same sort of thing for years with his rain-gauge.

Dr. Warburton put a foot wrong only once, and that was over the sorry affair of the drains. A series of dreadful epidemics that swept through the village decimating the population with remarkable mathematical precision convinced him that the drains of Scowle were defective and he appealed to the Council for permission to uproot them. The Council rejected the appeal on the ground that the drains in question were the only ones they had. About a week later old Ebby paid a nocturnal visit to the colliery and returned to the dispensary loaded with sticks of gelignite.

At four o'clock on the morning of April 4th 1898 Scowle was awakened by a terrific explosion. Men, women and children rushed barefoot to the pithead, fear clutching at their throats. Rescue parties descended to the Dribben seam, and the crowd waited in awful silence.

At first light I was standing with my mother in the street near the colliery gates. Suddenly I felt her grip tighten on my shoulder. The crowd shuddered and parted to make way for a grim procession. It came, unexpectedly, from the direction of the lower end of the village. I saw two stretchers and the tattered figures of two men whom I recognized as Dr. Warburton and my grandfather Ebby. They were both very pale. Then the colliery hooter sounded the long continuous blast of the "False Alarm."

Scowle was without its medical advisers for more than a week, but the village's largest cesspool suffered practically no damage. HOD.

A Christmas Eave Adventure

By Smith Minor (+ Green)

BEFORE you read what follows, for better or worse, and if you don't like poetry it will be for worse, I want to let you know that I am not quite sure if it really happened.

It may of, and I think it did, because things often happen to me that don't happen to other people. For instance, at the Zoo I once had a hankie taken out of my pocket by a zebra, and I've never met anyone else whose had that done to him or her, and another time I came upon what I thought was a worm with four ends, but when I untied it I found it was two worms that had got in a knot. It was a good thing for them I came along.

But what I am now going to tell you was much more extraordinary, and Green doesn't think it happened at all, he saying that when things happen in the dead of night they generally don't. Jest the same, when I told him about it, he agreed it was interesting, and he even helped me to write about it in the following poem. I can jest manage short poems when they come quickly and you don't have to think,

In fact, when they are like this one,
All over e'er they've scarce begun,
but I find that I get a bit dull when
doing long ones, so when I thought the
one you are now going to read was
getting dull I let Green have a whack
at it, and all the best bits are by him.

Well, now for the poem. I'll repeat the title, in case after all this you've forgotten it.

A CHRISTMAS EAVE ADVENTURE

It happened (saying that it did)
Upon one Christmas Eave,
When more snow lay upon the ground
Than Zulus would believe.*
Your boots went deep at ev'ry step,
And almost made you doubt
If after you had put them in
You'd ever get them out.
At last I got unto the house
Where I was going to.
My next rhyme is a bit of luck—
Their name was Donohue!
Outside was cold, inside was warm,
The hostess she was kind,
And though I dripped from head to foot,
She did not seem to mind,
But took me up three flights of stairs
That led up to my room.
"I've made an awful mess," I said.
She said, "The cure's a broom."

* Zulus get very little snow, if any. Author.

(Note.—She didn't put it quite like that, but you have to change things a bit sometimes in a poem. End of note.)

"Twould bore you if I told you how I washed my hands and face, And did my hair, and things like that, And then unpacked my case, You properly are all agog Of such things to get rid, And want to hear the starteling thing That hapened (if it did). So let us come unto the time When food and games were o'er, And I, being down, came up again Unto the topmost floor, And after brushing all my teath My clothes I slowly shed, And thinking solemn Yuletide thorts, I got into my bed. Around the house a chilly wind Did throuth the darkness float, Making a sound that might be made By some dispairing goat. Sometimes it hit the window with A creepy little tap, At other times it banged it hard, More like a postman's rap. Hist, what is this! Lo, what was that! One's heart beat faster! Hark! Was that the moaning of a ghost, Or just a small dog's bark? Mind you, a soljier back from war Might not of been desmayed, But, you can't get away from it, I felt a bit afraid. You see, thouh I can handel things Like beatels, whasps, or mice, There are some noises in the dark

That turn my blood to ice. I shut my eyes, and eek my ears, And tried to go to sleep, Then suddenly the window oped. I grew a quaking heep, As lo! Before me stood a most Extrordinery sight!

A man with wings upon his back, And shiming with blue light!

(Note.—This is the part that Green dosen't think hapened, but that I do. You see, if it had been a nightmair or if I'd made it up, the end wuold of been different, as you'll find out, that is, unless you don't care for the poem and have stoped. End of note.)

"Be not afraid, young Smith," he said, He seeing that I was, "I am not here to frighten you, No, I am here becos' I have a messidge that I want Spred to all far and near, 'Tis not a messidge of dispair, But one of Christmas cheer.

What thinkst thee of the world, young Smith?"

He said. "Speak! Be not dumb!" "Well, sir," I said, "it seems to me

Life is *un morceaux glumb.*"

"That's what I thort you thort," he said,

"So this is what I say, Jest keap your pecker up, becosre 'Twon't always be that way! A time will come when man and beast And bird, yea, even fish, Will all have jolly times, and live Exacktly as they wish!"

There'll be no povity or pane, And all shall eat their fill For 3-6-5 days in each year Of peace and of goodwill!"

"What about snails?" I asked. "Will they

Be happier, as well?"

"They'll be so happy, Smith," he said,

"They'll burst out of their shell!"

Then, lo! He turned and flapped his wings,

And, lo again! was gone!

And after that I fell asleep

Untill 'twas Christmas morn!

Now, gentel reader, you may think,

As dose my good freind Green,

That I am off my nutt, and that

This thing cuold not of been.

But how I work it out is this:

Some Truths are from us hid!

Perhaps it did not hapen, but

O, how one hopes it did!

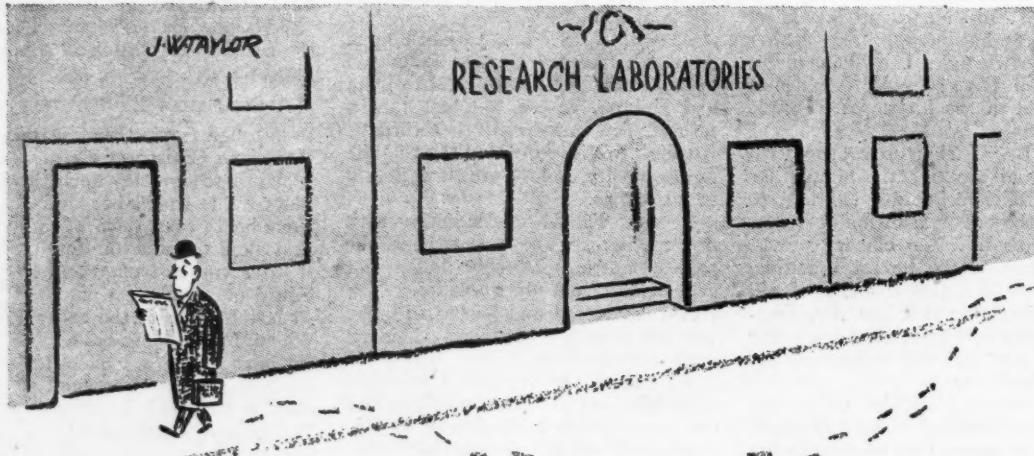
You see, if it did, well, we've only got to hang on for a bit, and lo! everything will be all right.

Green thinks that weather you beleive it or not, you won't like the last part of the poem as much as the first, he saying, "It seems to me a bit mushy, old boy, and what poeple want to-day is pep. Take it from me, they'd rather of had a headless ghost breething fire."

"How cuold he breeth anything without a head?" I said.

"A ghost cuold," he said.

Anyhow, that's what hapened, and you can't alter what hapened (if it did).



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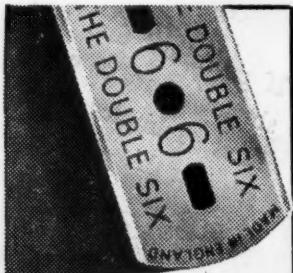
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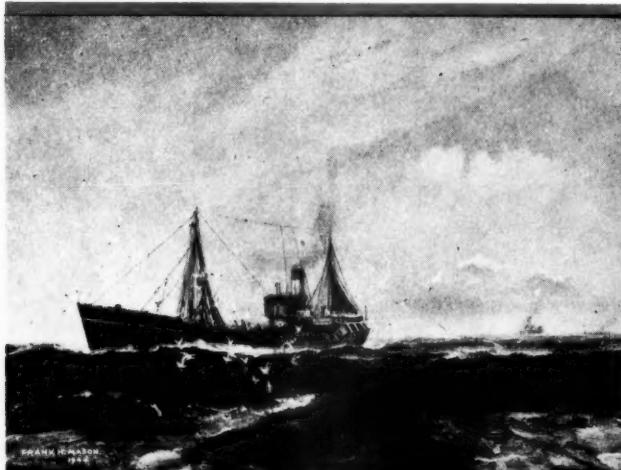
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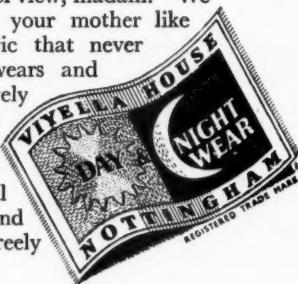
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